From: DA Daily PM Newsletter enewsletter@districtadministrationmagazine.com Subject: Leadership shifts: 4 superintendents split with districts as others plan retirement

Date: September 19, 2023 at 4:01 PM
To: jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us



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Dana Mortenson, DA guest columnist

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#### **TOP STORY**



Leadership shifts: 4 superintendents split with districts as others head for retirement

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#### AROUND THE NATION

San Antonio ISD releases preliminary school consolidation plan impacting half of the district's schools

Texas Public Radio

All told, the preliminary school consolidation plan presented to the board Monday night would impact half of the district's 98 campuses and cut the number of buildings SAISD operates by 20%. In addition to the 19 schools recommended for closure, 30 would receive more students, relocate, or change their grade configuration.

Read more >>

How a rural Alabama school system outdid the country with gains in math

AD Moure

UI INCANO

Piedmont City schools notched significant improvement in math, landing in the top spot among school districts across the country in a comparison of scores from before and during the pandemic. Nationwide, students on average fell half a year behind in math, researchers say.

Read more >>

# Student's LGBTQ mural must be removed from Michigan school, board says

**NBC News** 

The high schooler, who painted the mural after winning a student art contest, said she hoped the mural would "make people feel welcome."

Read more >>

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From: Ballotpedia updates@info.ballotpedia.org

Subject: Hall Pass: Your Ticket to Understanding School Board Politics, Edition #78

Date: September 20, 2023 at 4:32 PM
To: jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us



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### Ballotpedia's Hall Pass

Keeping you up to date on school board politics and education policy

#### Welcome to Hall Pass

September 20, 2023

Welcome to *Hall Pass*, a newsletter written to keep you plugged into the conversations driving school board politics and governance.

In today's edition, you'll find:

- On the issues: The debate over the Department of Education
- In your district: supporting students with special needs
- Share candidate endorsements with us!
- · School board filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications
- Federal judge blocks California district's policy prohibiting officials and teachers from revealing students' gender identity to parents
- Extracurricular: education news from around the web
- Candidate Connection survey
- Candidate canvass: survey responses from around the country

Share story ideas or reactions by replying to this email.

BALLOTPEDIA

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#### On the issues: The debate over the Department of Education

The existence and role of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) have been topics of debate since Congress <u>created</u> the department in 1980. Recently, several Republican presidential candidates, including former President Donald Trump (R), <u>said</u> they would support abolishing the department. This week, we'll look at arguments for and against keeping the DOE.

Jacqueline Elliott writes that efforts to abolish the DOE are misguided. Elliot says the department has an important role in advancing equal opportunities in education, promoting programs that make American students more competitive internationally, and supporting state and local government educational initiatives.

Roger Simon writes that the DOE is unnecessary and should be eliminated. Simon says education should be handled as locally as possible and should not be subject to federal government control through regulations and conditional grants. He says federal education standards have harmed student learning.

### Efforts to eliminate the Education Department are misguided | Jacqueline Elliott, The Daily Press

"There are multiple scholarly goals that easily fit into two categories. The first seeks to strengthen the federal commitment to equal educational opportunity for every individual. The second enables student achievement to prepare them for global competitiveness. It is crucial to understand that the agency supports our state and local educational initiatives. This includes public and private nonprofit research organizations and community-based agencies. ... It is time to seriously consider the drastic results of ill-meaning and power-hungry legislators. ... Our elected leaders need to understand that codification or elimination of a federal department that directly affects a majority of citizens within a district is not the last word regarding something as important as educating future generations."

# For the Sake of Our Children, Abolish the Department of Education | Roger L. Simon, The Epoch Times

"I don't know if there's a more reactionary, superfluous arm of the U.S. government than the Department of Education. ... Education should always be done locally as far from Washington burgauerate as humanly possible.

This local control should avail itself of charter schools and school choice (obviously), homeschooling, and every other form of education that people—largely parents—can devise for the better education of their children to prepare them and the country for the future. ... Money becomes an instrument of control, with the government withholding it if you don't go along with their diktats. ... The results of federal control of our children's education, any federal control—including the egregious Common Core—have been nothing short of horrendous."

#### In your district: supporting students with special needs

School districts face diverse issues and challenges. We want to hear what's happening in your school district. Please complete the very brief survey below—anonymously, if you prefer—and we may share your response with fellow subscribers in an upcoming newsletter.

How can districts best support and advocate for students with special needs or disabilities?

Click here to respond!

#### Share candidate endorsements with us!

As part of our goal to solve the <u>ballot information problem</u>, Ballotpedia is gathering information about school board candidate endorsements. The ballot information gap widens the further down the ballot you go, and is worst for the more than 500,000 local offices nationwide, such as school boards or special districts. Endorsements can help voters know more about their candidates and what they stand for.

Do you know of an individual or group that has endorsed a candidate in your district?

Click here to respond!

# School board update: filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications

Ballotpedia has historically covered school board elections in about 500 of the country's largest districts. We're gradually expanding the number we cover with our eye on the more than 13,000 districts with elected school boards.

#### **November elections**

Nov. 7 is the biggest election date of the year, and voters across the country will decide state and local races—including for school boards (subscribe to our *Daily Brew* newsletter for Ballotpedia's coverage and analysis of elections up and down the ballot). Throughout the fall, we'll preview the most interesting and pivotal school board elections happening that day. Let's step back and take a look at the big picture.

We're covering school board elections in the following 16 states on Nov. 7:

#### School board elections on Nov. 7, 2023

This table shows the 16 states where Ballotpedia is covering school board elections on Nov. 7, 2023, and associated upcoming filing deadlines. Dates shaded in blue are upcoming.

State	Filing deadline
Colorado	September 1
Idaho	September 8
lowa	September 21
Kansas	June 1
Kentucky	June 6
Minnesota	August 15
Mississippi	September 6
New Hampshire	July 21
New Jersey	July 3)
New Mexico	August 29
North Carolina	July 21

Ohio	August 9	
Pennsylvania	August 1	
Texas	August 21	
Virginia	June 13	
Washington	May 19	

#### BALLOTPEDIA

In seven of those states—Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington—we are covering *all* school board elections on Nov. 7. We'll be bringing you detailed coverage of many of those elections.

# Federal judge blocks California district's policy prohibiting officials and teachers from revealing students' gender identity to parents

In previous issues of this newsletter, we've offered contrasting perspectives on whether school officials and teachers should notify parents when their child publicly affirms a new gender identity (see <a href="here">here</a> and <a href="here">here</a> and <a href="here">here</a>, for recent arguments).

In California, the question has divided district board members, teachers, parents, state officials—and increasingly state and federal judges.

On Sept. 14, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
Judge Roger Benitez issued an <u>injunction</u> against the <u>Escondido Union School</u>
<u>District</u>, temporarily blocking the district's 2022 policy prohibiting officials
and teachers from alerting parents that their child may be using a new name
or set of pronouns.

President <u>George W. Bush</u> (R) nominated Benitez to the Southern District court in 2003.

Under the policy, school employees cannot disclose a student's new gender identity when talking with parents, unless the student has first given their consent.

Escondido Union School District teachers Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori Ann West <u>sued the district</u> in April, alleging the policy <u>violates their rights to free speech and freedom of religion</u>. Among others, the suit named all five members of the district board and the five members of the California Board of Education as defendants.

The Escondido Union School District <u>responded</u> to the lawsuit, saying its policy was rooted in the School Success and Opportunity Act (<u>AB 1266</u>), a state law enacted in 2013 <u>allowing</u> students in public schools to access facilities and participate in activities consistent with their gender identity. In a section of its website answering frequently asked questions about AB 1266, the California Department of Education <u>states</u>: "The right of transgender students to keep their transgender status private is grounded in California's antidiscrimination laws as well as federal and state laws. Disclosing that a student is transgender without the student's permission may violate California's antidiscrimination law by increasing the student's vulnerability to harassment and may violate the student's right to privacy."

Some districts have pushed back against the state Department of Education's position on AB 1266. Since July, at least seven districts have passed parental notification policies requiring officials and teachers to notify parents when a student uses a new name or pronouns:

- <u>Chino Valley Unified School District</u> Board of Education voted 4-1 (July 20)
- Murrieta Valley Unified School District Board of Education voted 3-2 (Aug. 10)
- <u>Temecula Valley Unified School District</u> School Board voted 3-2 (Aug. 22)
- Anderson Union High School District School Board voted 4-1 (Aug. 22)
- Rocklin Unified School District School Board voted 4-1 (Sept. 7)
- Orange Unified School District Board of Trustees voted 4-0 (Sept. 7)
- <u>Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District</u> Board of Trustees voted 5-0 (Sept. 14)

As districts have adopted conflicting gender identity policies the last few months, state and federal judges have weighed in—but without settling on a legal consensus.

On Sept. 7, Superior Court of San Bernardino County Judge <u>Thomas</u>
<u>Garza</u> blocked Chino Valley's <u>parental notification</u> policy in response to
California Attorney General <u>Rob Bonta</u>'s (D) lawsuit. Bonta <u>said</u>, "The forced
outing policy wrongfully endangers the physical, mental, and emotional well-

classroom and at home." A hearing is scheduled for Oct. 13.

Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) appointed Garza in 2007.

In July, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California Judge John Mendez dismissed a parent's challenge to the Chico Unified School District's policy of not disclosing a student's gender identity to parents. Mendez, whom Bush appointed to the court in 2007, wrote school officials "demonstrated a legitimate state interest in creating a zone of protection for transgender students and those questioning their gender identity from adverse hostile reactions, including, but not limited to, domestic abuse and bullying."

#### Extracurricular: education news from around the web

This section contains links to recent education-related articles from around the internet. If you know of a story we should be reading, reply to this email to share it with us!

- Chronic absenteeism has become a crisis | Fordham Institute
- <u>'We've lost our advantage on education'</u>: <u>Democrats grasp for wins on public schools</u> | *Politico*
- States Look to Social-Emotional Learning to Combat Student Misbehavior, Poor Mental Health | Education Week
- 2 Arkansas school districts deny claims that they broke a law on teaching race and sexuality | NBC News
- 74 Interview: Stanford Economist Eric Hanushek on COVID's Trillion-Dollar Impact on Students | The 74
- Opinion: People Don't Want to Be Teachers Anymore. Can You Blame Them? | The New York Times

Take our Candidate Connection survey to reach voters in your district





Everyone deserves to know their candidates. However, we know it can be hard for voters to find information about their candidates, especially for local offices such as school boards. That's why we created Candidate Connection—a survey designed to help candidates tell voters about their campaigns, their issues, and so much more.

In the 2022 election cycle, 6,087 candidates completed the survey. If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, click <u>here to take the survey</u>.

The survey contains over 30 questions, and you can choose the ones you feel will best represent your views to voters. If you complete the survey, a box with your answers will display on your Ballotpedia profile. Your responses will also appear in our <u>sample ballot</u>.

And if you're not running for school board, but there is an election in your community this year, <u>share the link with the candidates</u> and urge them to take the survey!

If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, click here to take the survey.

#### Candidate canvass: survey responses from around the country

In this section, we feature school board candidate responses to surveys and questionnaires from political organizations, news outlets, or governments. Know of a survey or questionnaire in your area that we've missed? Reply to this email to share it with us!

Washington will hold school board general elections on Nov. 7. Washington is also one of 10 states in which we are covering school board elections in every district.

Today, we're going to take a look at two candidates running for the Director District No. 2 seat on the Bellevue School District No. 405 board of directors. The city of Bellevue sits on the other side of Lake Washington from Seattle. The excerpts we're featuring here come from the <u>King County Local Voters' Pamphlet</u>. The pamphlet, which includes candidate statements, is mailed to registered voters in the county. The Kings County Elections office does not edit the candidate statements.

Three candidates ran in the Aug. 1 primary—incumbent Carolyn Watson, James VanRosmalen, and Ryan Sugden. Watson and Sugden <u>advanced to the general election</u>, with Watson having won 70.44% of the vote to Sugden's 17.32%. Watson and Sugden submitted their statements to King County Elections before the primary.

#### Carolyn Watson (first elected in 2019)



I am committed to providing the excellent education for which Bellevue is known and doing so in a manner that is equitable. I will continue my commitment to providing a holistic education that balances the academic as well as emotional and mental health needs of all our students, including the most marginalized, and those with special needs, whether visible or invisible.

I began this commitment pre-pandemic and seek another term to continue to ensure our students not

only do well but that they thrive. Having worked to select our incoming Superintendent, I look forward to collaborating with our educators and staff towards creative and innovative approaches and ideas.

Read Watson's full statement here.

#### Ryan Sugden



Equity is an accounting term. It means ownership (as in, "How much equity do you have in your house?") I intend to give families in District Two ownership in their educational choices.

District Two includes Ardmore Elementary, where I serve on the PTSA. Ardmore is a community of families diverse economically, culturally, and linguistically. The whole Bellevue School District would benefit from hearing this community's voice on the board. I am running to amplify their voices.

Read Sugden's full statement here.

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From: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us

Subject: Books and SB 150

Date: September 22, 2023 at 1:24 PM

To: Fiona Morgan fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com



#### Fiona,

Senate Bill 150, commonly known as the "Parental Rights Bill", was passed by legislators, vetoed by the governor, and overridden by the Senate and House on 3/29/23. This bill requires parental consent for:

- · Mental health counseling related to human sexuality;
- · Gathering certain survey information from students for research purposes;
- · Instruction through curriculum or programs on human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases (grades 6 or above).

The bill also states, "Any child, regardless of grade level, enrolled in the district does not receive any instruction or presentation that has a goal or purpose of students studying or exploring gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation."

In response to guidance provided by the Kentucky Department of Education, we reviewed current courses, programming, instructional resources and learning experiences to ensure compliance with the law (SB 150) including, but not limited to, health education curriculum, Advanced Placement coursework, dual credit courses and extracurricular activities. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort that included all school library media specialists, legal council, and our district leadership team. Our school library books and programs are considered instructional resources, and are made available to support the grade-level standards being taught. School libraries are instructional support entities within our school. As such, school libraries operate differently than a public library system.

As you may find in your research, this bill could continue to evolve. As a state public school, we are obligated to implement the law and we will respond if there are changes to the legislation.

Below you will find the bill: https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/23RS/sb150/bill.pdf

In Boyle County Schools, we teach rigorous grade-level state standards, and offer a variety of instructional programs and opportunities for our students. We will continue to give students the best education and opportunity possible.

Thanks, Mark Wade



From: Fiona Morgan fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com

Subject: Re: Books and SB 150

Date: September 22, 2023 at 6:52 PM

To: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us



Got it, thank you for clarifying this! I'll let you know if I have any other questions.

On Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:24 PM Mark Wade <mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us> wrote:

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Thanks, Mark Wade



Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media From: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us

Subject: Fwd: Books and SB 150

Date: September 25, 2023 at 2:18 PM

To: Jennifer Newby jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us



FYI

---- Forwarded message --From: Mark Wade <mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us> Date: Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:24 PM Subject: Books and SB 150

To: Fiona Morgan <fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com>

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### **MARK WADE**

BOYLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT

0: 859-236-6634

E: mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us

A: 101 Citation Drive - Suite C

Danville, KY 40422



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BOYLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT

0: 859-236-6634

E: mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us A: 101 Citation Drive - Suite C

Danville, KY 40422

From: Fiona Morgan fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com

Subject: Re: Books and SB 150 Date: October 5, 2023 at 8:19 AM

To: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kvschools.us



Hi Mark, I have a few clarifying questions on this. They're listed below.

Did KDE specifically say that schools should remove library books?

Did KDE mainly leave it up to districts and their legal counsel to interpret the law?

Is it correct that Stephen Dexter helped interpret the law for Boyle Schools?

SB 150 says there can't be instruction through curriculum or programs on human sexuality for grades 5 and below. Are libraries considered programs in this case? If so, why are books on sexuality being removed from the middle school and high school, in addition to the elementary schools?

The law does not mention libraries or library books. You said library books are "instructional resources." But the law doesn't mention instructional resources either. The law says "...does not receive any instruction or presentation..." In many people's understanding, the word "instruction" means the process of teaching, and not physical materials like books. Did the district interpret the word "instruction" to mean instructional materials?

Did KDE give any guidance on this language, or did the district / attorney interpret this language?

On Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 6:52 PM Fiona Morgan < <a href="mailto:fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com">fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com</a> wrote: Got it, thank you for clarifying this! I'll let you know if I have any other questions.

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Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media

Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media From: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us

Subject: Re: Books and SB 150 Date: October 9, 2023 at 8:38 AM

To: Fiona Morgan fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com



Hey Fiona,

Stephen Dexter answered most of these questions, so I will try to fill in any holes. Many of these initial decisions were made before I became Superintendent, but I support the decisions. Since it is up to the district leadership to determine what books are shelved in the library, the decision was made to comply with SB 150 with the library collection. As Stephen stated, "There is not a requirement or right for certain books to be made available; rather, it is up to district leadership to determine what books, curriculum and programs should be included in district libraries. Library books are reviewed, removed or added to on an annual basis at the discretion of district leadership and needs."

If a student or parent desires a book we do not circulate, I encourage them to visit the public library or purchase it online. I hope this helps!

Sincerely, Mark Wade

On Thu, Oct 5, 2023 at 8:19 AM Fiona Morgan < fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com> wrote: i Hi Mark, I have a few clarifying questions on this. They're listed below.

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Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media

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From: Fiona Morgan fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com

Subject: Re: Books and SB 150 Date: October 10, 2023 at 4:33 PM

To: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us



Thank you Mark - I'll let you know if I have any other questions.

On Mon, Oct 9, 2023 at 8:39 AM Mark Wade < mark.wade@boyle.kvschools.us> wrote: Hey Fiona,

Stephen Dexter answered most of these questions, so I will try to fill in any holes. Many of these initial decisions were made before I became Superintendent, but I support the decisions. Since it is up to the district leadership to determine what books are shelved in the library, the decision was made to comply with SB 150 with the library collection. As Stephen stated, "There is not a requirement or right for certain books to be made available; rather, it is up to district leadership to determine what books, curriculum and programs should be included in district libraries. Library books are reviewed, removed or added to on an annual basis at the discretion of district leadership and needs."

If a student or parent desires a book we do not circulate, I encourage them to visit the public library or purchase it online. I hope this helps!

Sincerely, Mark Wade

On Thu, Oct 5, 2023 at 8:19 AM Fiona Morgan <a href="mailto:sine-morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com">fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com</a> wrote:

Hi Mark, I have a few clarifying questions on this. They're listed below.

Did KDE specifically say that schools should remove library books?

Did KDE mainly leave it up to districts and their legal counsel to interpret the law?

Is it correct that Stephen Dexter helped interpret the law for Boyle Schools?

SB 150 says there can't be instruction through curriculum or programs on human sexuality for grades 5 and below. Are libraries considered programs in this case? If so, why are books on sexuality being removed from the middle school and high school, in addition to the elementary schools?

The law does not mention libraries or library books. You said library books are "instructional resources." But the law doesn't mention instructional resources either. The law says "...does not receive any instruction or presentation..." In many people's understanding, the word "instruction" means the process of teaching, and not physical materials like books. Did the district interpret the word "instruction" to mean instructional materials?

Did KDE give any guidance on this language, or did the district / attorney interpret this language?

On Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 6:52 PM Fiona Morgan <a href="mailto:single-grassnewsmedia.com">fiona.morgan@bluegrassnewsmedia.com</a> wrote: Got it, thank you for clarifying this! I'll let you know if I have any other questions.

On Fri, Sep 22, 2023 at 1:24 PM Mark Wade <mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us> wrote: Fiona.

Senate Bill 150, commonly known as the "Parental Rights Bill", was passed by legislators, vetoed by the governor, and overridden by the Senate and House on 3/29/23. This bill requires parental consent for:

- Mental health counseling related to human sexuality;
- · Gathering certain survey information from students for research purposes;
- Instruction through curriculum or programs on human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases (grades 6 or above).

The bill also states, "Any child, regardless of grade level, enrolled in the district does not receive any instruction or presentation that has a goal or purpose of students studying or exploring gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation."

In response to guidance provided by the Kentucky Department of Education, we reviewed current courses, programming, instructional resources and learning experiences to ensure compliance with the law (SB 150) including, but not limited to, health education curriculum, Advanced Placement coursework, dual credit courses and extracurricular activities. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort

that included all school library media specialists, legal council, and our district leadership team. Our school library books and programs are considered instructional resources, and are made available to support the grade-level standards being taught. School libraries are instructional support entities within our school. As such, school libraries operate differently than a public library system.

As you may find in your research, this bill could continue to evolve. As a state public school, we are obligated to implement the law and we will respond if there are changes to the legislation.

Below you will find the bill:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/23RS/sb150/bill.pdf

In Boyle County Schools, we teach rigorous grade-level state standards, and offer a variety of instructional programs and opportunities for our students. We will continue to give students the best education and opportunity possible.

Thanks, Mark Wade



Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media

Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media



Thank you, Fiona Morgan Reporter The Advocate-Messenger Bluegrass News Media From: Mark Wade mark.wade@boyle.kyschools.us

Subject: SB 150 list

Date: September 25, 2023 at 2:20 PM

To: Jennifer Newby jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us





SB 150 and 5 Removals - Boyle County - Sheet1.pdf



From: DA Daily PM Newsletter enewsletter@districtadministrationmagazine.com Subject: Leadership shifts: School board-superintendent clashes lead to more change

Date: September 25, 2023 at 4:00 PM
To: jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us





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The Two-Minute Afternoon Briefing for K-12 Leaders



#### TRENDING ON DA

Why laws that bar teaching about race, LGBTQ topics have little to block

White authors and characters remain far more present in K12 curriculum than authors and characters of any other race or ethnicity, according to the "The Search for More Complex Racial and Ethnic Representation" study by Ed Trust.

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#### **TOP STORY**



#### Leadership shifts: School boardsuperintendent clashes lead to more change

Moreno Valley Unified School District dismisses leader in wake of \$27 million settlement with the family of a boy who died in a middle school fight.

Read more >>

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This 20-minute Ed Talk will outline the pros and cons of synchronous online learning and asynchronous remote learning, how to successfully implement each model to better meet the needs of students, and highlight some of the solutions, tools and platforms that can help to create effective online or remote learning environments.

Register now >>

#### AROUND THE NATION

As student mental health needs leap, schools seek a next generation of counselors

MPR News

Student mental health problems have become chronic in the COVID-19 era with school disruptions and family illnesses taking a toll. It's not possible to reach all the kids who need help.

Read more >>

School kids are so violent coming out of the pandemic that they're sending teachers to the hospital, but an expert says to resist 'get tough' approaches

Fortune

In Florida, a high school student beat a paraprofessional unconscious. A 15-year-old in Georgia left her teacher with difficulty walking. And a group of students in Texas sent their assistant principal to the hospital after an assault.

Read more >>

More schools are adopting 4-day weeks. For parents, the challenge is day 5

AP News

Hundreds of school systems around the country have adopted four-day weeks in recent years, mostly in rural and western parts of the U.S. Districts cite cost savings and advantages for teacher recruitment, although some have questioned the effects on students who already missed out on significant learning during the pandemic.

Read more >>

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From: Ballotpedia updates@info.ballotpedia.org

Subject: Hall Pass: Your Ticket to Understanding School Board Politics, Edition #79

Date: September 27, 2023 at 4:32 PM
To: jennifer.newby@boyle.kyschools.us



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### Ballotpedia's Hall Pass

Keeping you up to date on school board politics and education policy

#### Welcome to Hall Pass

September 27, 2023

Welcome to *Hall Pass*, a newsletter written to keep you plugged into the conversations driving school board politics and governance. In today's edition, you'll find:

- On the issues: The debate over what counts as school library censorship
- In your district: supporting students with special needs
- · Share candidate endorsements with us!
- School board filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications
- North Carolina set to become eighth state in 2023 to provide all students with taxpayer funding for private education
- Extracurricular: education news from around the web
- Candidate Connection survey

Share story ideas or reactions by replying to this email.

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SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER









# On the issues: The debate over what counts as school library censorship

In this section, we curate reporting, analysis, and commentary on the issues school board members deliberate when they set out to offer the best education possible in their district. Missed an issue? Click <u>here</u> to see the previous education debates we've covered.

Does limiting access to certain books in school libraries qualify as a form of censorship?

The staff at Pen America write that book bans occur when school administrators, under pressure from, say, government officials, parents, or community members, limit or remove access to books because of concerns about content. They argue that librarians and educators should curate the selection of library books on the basis of best practices and in ways that are content-neutral.

Max Eden and Jay P. Greene write that many examples of diminished school library material access do not amount to censorship since the books are often still available with restrictions. They also say that in cases where books are fully removed from library shelves, the materials are often not appropriate for school-aged children.

#### Book Bans: Frequently Asked Questions | Staff, Pen America

"Today, books are under profound attack in the U.S. ... And everywhere, it is the books that have long fought for a place on the shelf that are being targeted. Books by authors of color, by LGBTQ+ authors, by women. Books about racism, sexuality, gender, history. ... PEN America defines a school book ban as any action taken against a book based on its content and as a result of parent or community challenges, administrative decisions, or in response to direct or threatened action by lawmakers or other governmental officials, that leads to a previously accessible book being either completely removed from availability to students, or where access to a book is restricted or diminished. Diminished access is a form of censorship and has educational implications that extend beyond a title's removal. It is important to recognize that books available in schools, whether in a school or classroom library, or as part of a curriculum, were selected by librarians and educators as part of the

educational orienings to students. Book bans occur when those choices are overridden by school boards, administrators, teachers, or politicians, on the basis of a particular book's content."

### **Don't Worry About 'Book Bans'** | Max Eden and Jay P. Greene, *EducationWeek*

"But if you take a close look, you might come to the same conclusions we did: that this divisive debate has been manufactured for partisan purpose—both on the part of those pushing free expression and those pushing parents' rights—that most 'banned' books aren't really banned, and that when they are, it's mostly reasonable. The media keep on using the word 'banned.' But that word doesn't mean what you think it means. In common usage, banned means 'made unavailable.' But in this debate, a book can be both 'banned' and available to students. How? PEN America, the nonprofit whose data have formed a prominent basis of this public controversy, defines 'ban' quite expansively. If a book has been temporarily removed from shelves for review and then deemed acceptable and put back, it has been 'banned.' If a book is moved from a school library to a guidance counselor's office, it has been 'banned.' If parent permission is required, it has been 'banned.' If a book is moved from one section of a school library to a section for older students, it has been 'banned.' ... There's plenty to get worked up about and plenty that divides us. But so-called "book bans" shouldn't make the list."

#### In your district: supporting students with special needs

We recently asked readers the following question about supporting students with special needs:

### How can districts best support and advocate for students with special needs or disabilities?

Thank you to all who responded. Today, we're sharing a handful of those responses. We'll return next month with another reader question. If you have ideas for a question you'd like to see us ask, reply to this email to let us know! A school board member from Vermont wrote.

Hire support staff and give parents the option to choice out of their local school

A school board member from New Jersey wrote:

Follow the spirit of IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act], make it everybody's job to make sure every student receives an appropriate education and is provided the services and accommodations they need.

A school board member from Michigan wrote.

By implementing better IEP [Individualized Education Program]

A school board member from Illinois wrote:

you need to get to know the parents and the students and do what's best for the student not the school.

A community member from California wrote.

Special education resources are widely available to schools and students through internal and external certificated resources (NPAs [Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School], NPS [Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Agency], credentialed providers, etc.). The issue is that the funding available to schools to pay for these services is limited and schools are forced to minimize these necessary services to the lowest budgetary minimums while accommodating the needs they are mandated to provide. This is not serving the needs of the students in the best possible way, rather it ensures that the bare minimum is being provided. Even then, every school seems to be forced to encroach on funds that are earmarked for general education purposes in order to meet the mandated services. A reevaluation of earmarks for SPED services is necessary so that funding keeps pace with the rising costs of these services.

A school board member from Minnesota wrote.

Hire quality teachers who can develop a relationship with each and every student to help them thrive.

#### Share candidate endorsements with us!

As part of our goal to solve the <u>ballot information problem</u>, Ballotpedia is gathering information about school board candidate endorsements. The

ballot information gap widens the further down the ballot you go, and is worst for the more than 500,000 local offices nationwide, such as school boards or special districts. Endorsements can help voters know more about their candidates and what they stand for.

Do you know of an individual or group that has endorsed a candidate in your district?

Click here to respond!

# School board filing deadlines, election results, and recall certifications

Ballotpedia has historically covered school board elections in about 500 of the country's largest districts. We're gradually expanding the number we cover with our eye on the more than 13,000 districts with elected school boards.

#### November elections

Nov. 7 is the biggest election date of the year, and voters across the country will decide state and local races—including for school boards (subscribe to our *Daily Brew* newsletter for Ballotpedia's coverage and analysis of elections up and down the ballot).

Beginning next week with the Oct. 4 edition of this newsletter, we'll bring you regular in-depth previews of the most interesting and pivotal Nov. 7 school board elections—including a look at the issues, candidates, endorsements, and campaign finance.

We're covering school board elections in the following 16 states on Nov. 7:

School board elections on Nov. 7, 2023

This table shows the 16 states where Ballotpedia is covering school board elections on Nov. 7, 2023, and associated filing deadlines.

State	riling deadline
Colorado	September 1
Idaho	Santomhar 9

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iuano	September 9
lowa	September 21
Kansas	June 1
Kentucky	June 6
Minnesota	August 15
Mississippi	September 6
New Hampshire	July 21
New Jersey	July 31
New Mexico	August 29
North Carolina	July 21
Ohio	August 9
Pennsylvania	August 1
Texas	August 21
Virginia	June 13
Washington	May 19

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In seven of those states—Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington—we are covering *all* school board elections on Nov. 7. We'll be bringing you detailed coverage of many of those elections.

# North Carolina set to become eighth state in 2023 to provide all students with taxpayer funding for private education

Seven states have <u>enacted programs</u> in 2023 allowing all or most K-12 students to receive taxpayer funding for private education options—and North Carolina will soon become the eighth.

On Sept. 22, Gov. Roy Cooper (D) announced that <u>he would not sign</u> or veto the state's \$30 billion budget, meaning that it will become law without his signature on Oct. 3. Included in the <u>budget</u> is an expansion of the state's Opportunity Scholarship program, which provides taxpayer funding

for eligible students to use at participating private schools. The <u>General Assembly</u> enacted the program in 2013 but limited the tuition assistance to students from low-income families who had previously attended a public school for at least a year.

Under the current plan, in the <u>2023-2024 school year</u>, a family of four with an annual income of no more than \$55,500 could receive \$6,492 per child. A family of four with an income of \$111,000 could receive up to 90% of the \$6,492.

The expanded program increases the amount students receive, eliminates the income limit, and removes the requirement that students attend public school for at least a year before applying. The amount of tuition assistance will still decline as household income rises.

Cooper opposed broadening the Opportunity Scholarship program but did not veto the budget so that a provision expanding Medicaid could take effect. Republicans control both chambers of the General Assembly and hold a veto-proof majority, meaning they could have overridden Cooper's veto. Cooper <u>said</u>, "Make no mistake, overall this is a bad budget that seriously shortchanges our schools, prioritizes power grabs, keeps shady backroom deals secret and blatantly violates the constitution, and many of its provisions will face legal action."

North Carolina has a <u>divided government</u> and is <u>one of 29 states</u> in which one party holds a veto-proof majority in both legislative chambers. Republicans have a 30-20 majority in the Senate and a 72-48 majority in the House. At a minimum, a party has to have a three-fifths majority in a chamber in North Carolina to override a gubernatorial veto—30 seats in the Senate and 72 seats in the House.

Republicans <u>gained</u> a veto-proof majority in the House on April 5, when state Rep. <u>Tricia Cotham</u>, who served as a Democrat in the state House from 2007 to 2017 and was elected to the chamber again in 2022, said she was <u>joining</u> <u>the Republican Party</u>.

Democratic lawmakers opposed expanding the Opportunity Scholarship program. State Sen. <u>Gladys Robinson</u> (D) <u>said</u>, "We're using public taxpayer money to subsidize private schools for wealthy people, and that's not because they asked for it but because you want to give it to them."

The Republican Party of North Carolina Chairman Michael Whatley said, "This

Dudget is a victory for families and businesses all across inorth Carolina. It cuts their taxes, leaving more money in their pockets, and expands educational freedom for families to seize the best opportunity for their children."

North Carolina joins <u>seven other states</u> this year that have <u>expanded or enacted programs</u> providing all or most students with taxpayer funding for private education options. Such programs come in a variety of forms, including Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), school vouchers, and tax-credit scholarships.

ESA programs give eligible students access to government-managed accounts funded with taxpayer money they can spend on a range of approved educational alternatives, such as private school tuition, tutoring services, and homeschooling supplies. Voucher programs pay for eligible students to attend private schools, though the money typically goes directly from the government to the school. Tax-credit scholarships come in a variety of forms, though they typically allow individuals and businesses to lower their tax burden by donating to scholarships that can be used at private schools.

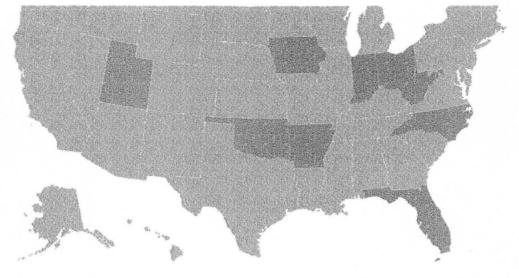
All seven states that expanded their programs or enacted new ones this year have Republican trifectas.

- lowa: Gov. Kim Reynolds (R) <u>signed</u> a law creating an ESA program on Jan. 24.
- Utah: Gov. Spencer Cox (R) <u>signed</u> a law creating an ESA program on Jan. 30. Utah has a Republican trifecta.
- Arkansas: Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders (R) <u>signed</u> a bill creating an Education Savings Account (ESA) program on March 8.
- Florida: Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) <u>signed</u> a bill expanding the state's Family Empowerment Scholarship program on March 27.
- Oklahoma: Gov. Kevin Stitt (R) <u>signed</u> a law creating a fully refundable education tax-credit program on May 25.
- Indiana: Gov. Eric Holcomb (R) <u>signed</u> a bill expanding its Indiana Choice Scholarship program on July 3.
- Ohio: Gov. Mike DeWine (R) <u>signed</u> a bill expanding the Educational Choice Scholarship program on July 4.

States that expanded or enacted programs in 2023 providing all or most students with taxpayer funding for private education options







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Overall, 10 states have programs allowing all or most students to use taxpayer funding for private education. <u>Arizona</u> expanded its ESA program to provide universal eligibility in July 2022. In October 2022, the Virginia Supreme Court <u>ruled</u> the state's ESA program, first enacted in 2021, was constitutional.

At least <u>31 states</u> have some form of program enabling eligible students to use taxpayer funding for private educational options. In the majority of states, programs are limited to low-income students or students with disabilities.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) has made enacting an ESA program a legislative priority in 2023, though the state House was <u>unable to agree</u> on the details of a policy before the session <u>ended on May 29</u>. Abbott <u>said</u> he would call a special session in October to once again take up the ESA program.

Click <u>here</u> to learn more about state programs like ESAs, vouchers, and taxcredit scholarships.

#### Extracurricular: education news from around the web

This section contains links to recent education-related articles from around the internet. If you know of a story we should be reading, reply to this email to share it with us!

- Parents who want Youngkin's transgender policies enacted sue the Virginia Beach school board | Associated Press
- Will AI end education as we know it? Economist predicts schools, teachers could become 'obsolete' | Fox News
- Schools Chancellor David Banks says New York City to take new approach to teaching kids to read | CBS
- Franklin County judge orders temporary restraining order to stop overhaul of Ohio K-12 education | Ohio Capital Journal
- State Laws Restricting Curriculum, Pronoun Use Cause Confusion and Chaos in Schools | Education Week
- At 13 Baltimore City high schools, zero students tested proficient on 2023 state math exam | Fox 45 Baltimore
- The Top Target For Ransomware? It's Now K-12 Schools | Forbes

#### **Candidate Connection survey**



Today, we're taking a look at responses from two candidates facing off on Nov. 7 in the nonpartisan general election for <u>Academy School District</u> <u>20</u> school board, At-large, in Colorado. Four candidates are running for the two seats on the ballot. Incumbents <u>Heather Cloninger</u> and <u>Will Temby</u> are the only candidates in this race who've completed the survey.

Both candidates were first elected in 2019.

Academy District 20, which includes the northern parts of Colorado Springs, is the 10th largest district in the state, with an enrollment of around 26,600 students.

Here's how Cloninger answered the question, "Who do you look up to? Whose example would you like to follow, and why?"



"That's easy, my dad, Phil Armstrong. He was the one I've



looked up to my whole life. He was an elementary school teacher and principal my entire childhood and he retired after 40 years working in those roles. He was an amazing example of kindness, moral integrity, honesty, and so much more. His staff and co-workers saw him as a leader and as someone who was approachable and easy to come to in an emergency as well as for good advice. He loved working with children and has many children who think of him as

"their teacher", for life. My dad taught me so much over my lifetime. I'm grateful for the example he was to me, my sisters and my own children, as well as all those who knew him. He passed last year and many of his students attended the service."

Click here to read the rest of Cloninger's responses.

Here's how Temby answered the question, "Who do you look up to? Whose example would you like to follow, and why?"



"My father, Bill Temby, shaped my life greatly. He was president of his high school class, served in General Patton's 3rd Army in WWII, attended Harvard University and Harvard Medical School on the G.I. Bill, and raised with my mother five strong citizens of this nation."

Everyone deserves to know their candidates. However, we know it can be hard for voters to find information about their candidates, especially for local offices such as school boards. That's why we created Candidate Connection—a

survey designed to help candidates tell voters about their campaigns, their issues, and so much more.

Click here to read the rest of Temby's responses.

In the 2022 election cycle, 6,087 candidates completed the survey.

If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, click <u>here to take the survey</u>. And if you're not running for school board, but there is an election in your community this year, <u>share the link with the candidates</u> and urge them to take the survey! If you're a school board candidate or incumbent, click <u>here to take</u> the survey.

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